

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 AID-20 ACDA-19 GAC-01 SR-02 ORM-03 IO-12

OMB-01 RSR-01 /161 W

----- 042721

R 280623 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8487

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISLAMABAD 2485

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, PK, XD

SUBJ: PRESIDENT BHUTTO ON POW'S AND BANGLADESH

REF: NEW DELHI 3367

BEGIN SUMMARY: BHUTTO, IN INTERVIEW WITH ENGLISH PERIODICAL, HAS REINTERATED CURRENT GOP STANCE ON PAK POWS IN INDIA, WAR CRIMES TRIALS, RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH, AND BIHARIS. HE ASSERTED THAT PAKISTAN WAS PREPARED "BEAR THE CONSEQUENCES" IF, AS RESULT CURRENT DEADLOCK, POWS WERE NOT RETURNED. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT ESPoused HARD LINE, SOME ARE INTERPRETING HIS REMARKS AT MARCH 23 PAKISTAN DAY CEREMONIES AS HINTING AT POSSIBILITY OF MOVEMENT ON THESE ISSUES. END SUMMARY

1. ACCORDING TO MARCH 25 GGV PRESS HANDOUT, BHUTTO, IN RECENT INTERVIEW WITH CORRESPONDENT OF LONDON WEEKEND, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DISCUSSED PROBLEMS OF PAKISTANI POWS IN INDIA,
RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH, AND FUTURE OF BIHARIS.
PRESS RELEASE DID NOT INDICATE DATE OF INTERVIEW OR
WHETHER IT YET PUBLISHED IN UK.

2. PRISIONERS OF WAR: BHUTTO DENOUNCED AS " MONSTROUS"
RECENT INDICATIONS THAT BDG WAS PREPARED GO AHEAD WITH
WAR CRIMES TRIALS OF POWS. HE REITERATED THAT GOP
WAS WILLING TO HOLD TRIALS IN PAKISTAN OF THOSE POWS
WHO MIGHT HAVE " COMMITTED EXCESSES" BUT CATEGORICALLY
DENIED BDG RIGHT TO DO SO. WHEN CORRESPONDENT POINTED
OUT THAT ATTITUDES OF GOP AND BDG SEEMED TO INDICATE
DEADLOCK AND THAT THIS MIGHT MEAN POWS WOULD NOT
RETURN, PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY SNAPPED, " NEVER MIND,
BECAUSE NATIONS HAVE TO BEAR THE CONSEQUENCES. IT IS
A SACRIFICE WHICH OUR PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO BEAR".

3. RELATIONS WITH BANGLADESH: BHUTTO TOLD INTERVIEWER
PAKISTAN HAD VALID REASONS FOR NOT HAVING RECOGNIZED
BANGLADESH, INCLUDING SPECIAL PAK SENSITIVITIES DERIVING
FROM FORMER STATUS OF BANGLADESH AS INTEGAL PART OF
PAKISTAN. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (" IMPORTANT... THOUGH
NOT A DECISIVE ONE") WAS THAT DESPITE " ALL THE MISTAKES
AND ERRORS THAT WE COMMITTED", INDIA HAD INTERVENED
WITH " NAKED FORCE" TO CREATE BANGLADESH BY DISMEMBERING
PAKISTAN. ALTHOUGH RECOGNITION WAS " ONLY WAY" TO HAVE
GOOD RELATIONS WITH BD, PRESIDENT CONTINUED, PRE-
RECOGNITION TALKS WERE NECESSARY TO " PUT AN END TO ALL
POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FRICTION". HE CITED PRESIDENT
NIXON'S TALKS WITH MAO TSE- TUNG AS PRECEDENT FOR
MEETING IN ABSENCE OF RECOGNITION. HE CASTIGATED
ATTITUDE OF SHIEKH MUJIB, OF WHOM HE SAID HE " COULD
NOT RELY ON THE WORD OF A PERSON WHO BROKE IT AGAIN AND
AGAIN", AND ADVISED MUJIB TO TALK SENSIBLY AND TO
" GET OFF HIS HIGH HORSE".

4. BIHARIS: BHUTTO SAID THAT SINCE BIHARIS HAD CHOSEN
TO GO TO EAST PAKISTAN AFTER 1947 PARTITION, IT WAS THEREFORE
MUJIB'S " DUTY TO PROTECT CITIZENS". HE ADDED THAT
GOP WOULD NOT OBJECT TO " SOME" BIHARIS COMING TO
PAKISTAN, BUT ASSERTED THAT WEST PAKISTAN ALREADY HAD
MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF REFUGEES AND WAS NOT PREPARED
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TO BE " CRUSHED IN SUCH A MANNER ARBITRARILY". HE

CHARGED MUJIB WITH BUILDING " RACIST STATE" IN BANGLADESH
AND SAID THAT SHEIKH WOULD PROBABLY " HOUND OUT"
EVERYONE IN COUNTRY WHO WAS NOT BENGALI. " TOMMOROW
HE MIGHT WANT TO THROW OUT THE BUDDHISTS BECAUSE HE

IS AFTER THE BLOOD OF THE CHAKMAS". (COMMENT: GOP
MINISTER FOR MINORITY AFFAIRS AND TOURISM IS LEADER
OF CHAKMA TRIBE).

5. COMMENT: FOREGOING REMARKS REPRESENT NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE
IN CURRENT POSITIONS AND SERVE LARGEMLY TO REINTERATE
CURRENT GOP HARD LINE ON THESE ISSUES. AT SAME TIME,
SOME LOCAL OBSERVERS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT BHUTTO, IN
REMARKS AT PAKISTAN DAY PARADE IN RAWALPINDI MARCH 23,
EXPRESSED HOPE THAT POWS WOULD SOON RETURN TO " TAKE
UP THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES WITH THE ARMED FORCES", AND
WENT ON TO STATE HIS " FIRM BELIEF" THAT " THE DARK
CLOUDS WERE ABOUT TO DISSAPEAR". ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT
GAVE NO REASON FOR THIS DISPLAY OF OPTIMISM, THESE
OBSERVERS INTERPRETE HIS REMARKS AS POSSIBLE INDICATION
THAT PRESIDENT EXPECTS A EARLY MOVE ON POW ISSUE. (IF THERE

ARE GROUNDS FOR SUCH OPTIMISM, WE UNAWARE OF THEM).

DECON 3/26/75
SOBER

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